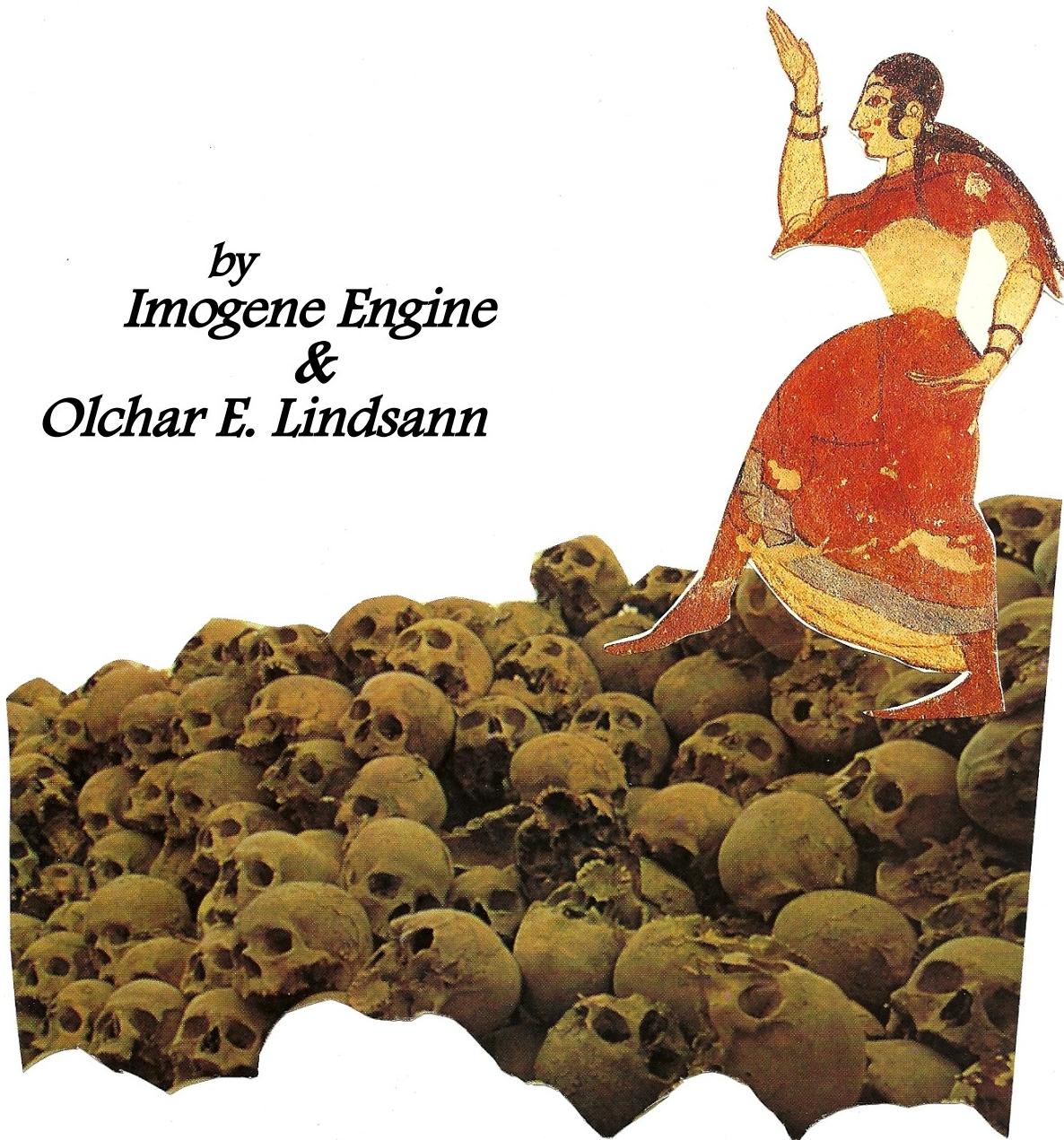


# The Hymn of Stone

*by*  
*Imogene Engine*  
*&*  
*Olchar E. Lindsann*



# I

and so the lamb found  
its own name hidden on the hill and near the sea,

she travelled down the caverns

like the voice of forests  
her breath was crisp and barely legible

the walls of rock breathed mist

bleating surface of a heart  
the gorge split  
bared like clean wool to a leering knife

the walls lined with Sumerian script  
and the moss wept

clouds passed

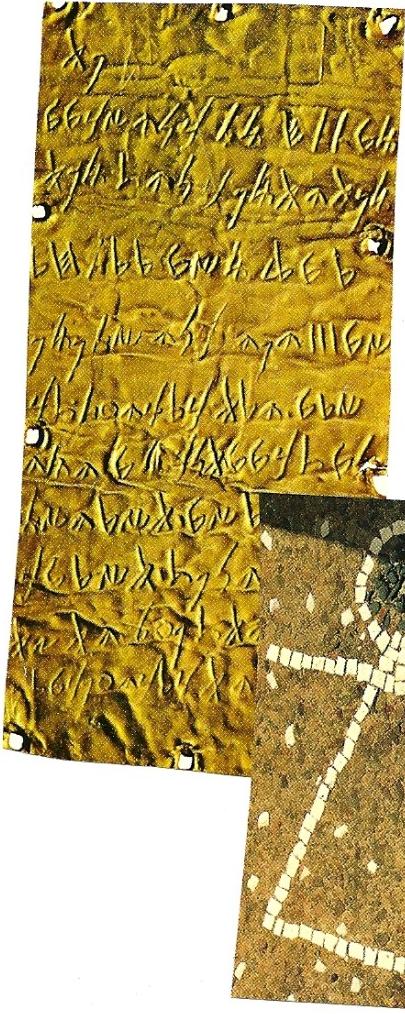
the cicadas fell from the sky:  
hush-hush.

her name is lineament and figment and thyme.  
little limbs, little bloat of stomach.

crawling.

a forest of goblet and sacred drink  
travelled below.  
Above, the sky's skin.  
freckling, as a timeless milk.

a stretch of ribbon is the way  
to the underneath  
to the underbelly of her heart.



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## II

First: the churning vat  
At the end: a diagram of pistils and pollen.

Never stones.  
Just a rub of wrists and sighing.

And long after dark: the melting and the seep of illness  
tar of the smoke from the hill panting to a halt.  
hymns sewn, and then unstitched.  
grace to the creeping lizard, a yellow pistol falls.  
curvilinear shock.  
sleep.

brimming waves  
and the sigh of silent things.

delta and then absence.  
Afterward:  
birds.



### **III**

A basket of ants distracted them.  
They were shepherds of the morning.  
The shadows of the tunnelled earth spoke in foreign tongues  
and they sang fearfully.

a molten abacus of mortal mortar.

A pavement set about with knives.

And the patterns relayed their sentimental tunes  
until their tongues wagged about the insects.

The sunlight filtered down.

Along obscure ways the traveller found himself immured  
and the animals' song was sung.



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## IV

Crisp was the clock  
shutting its eye to all of the bodies.

Bring me the sorrowful creature  
with its forehead of wood  
and its skin marked with notches  
like a soldier marked for his sins.

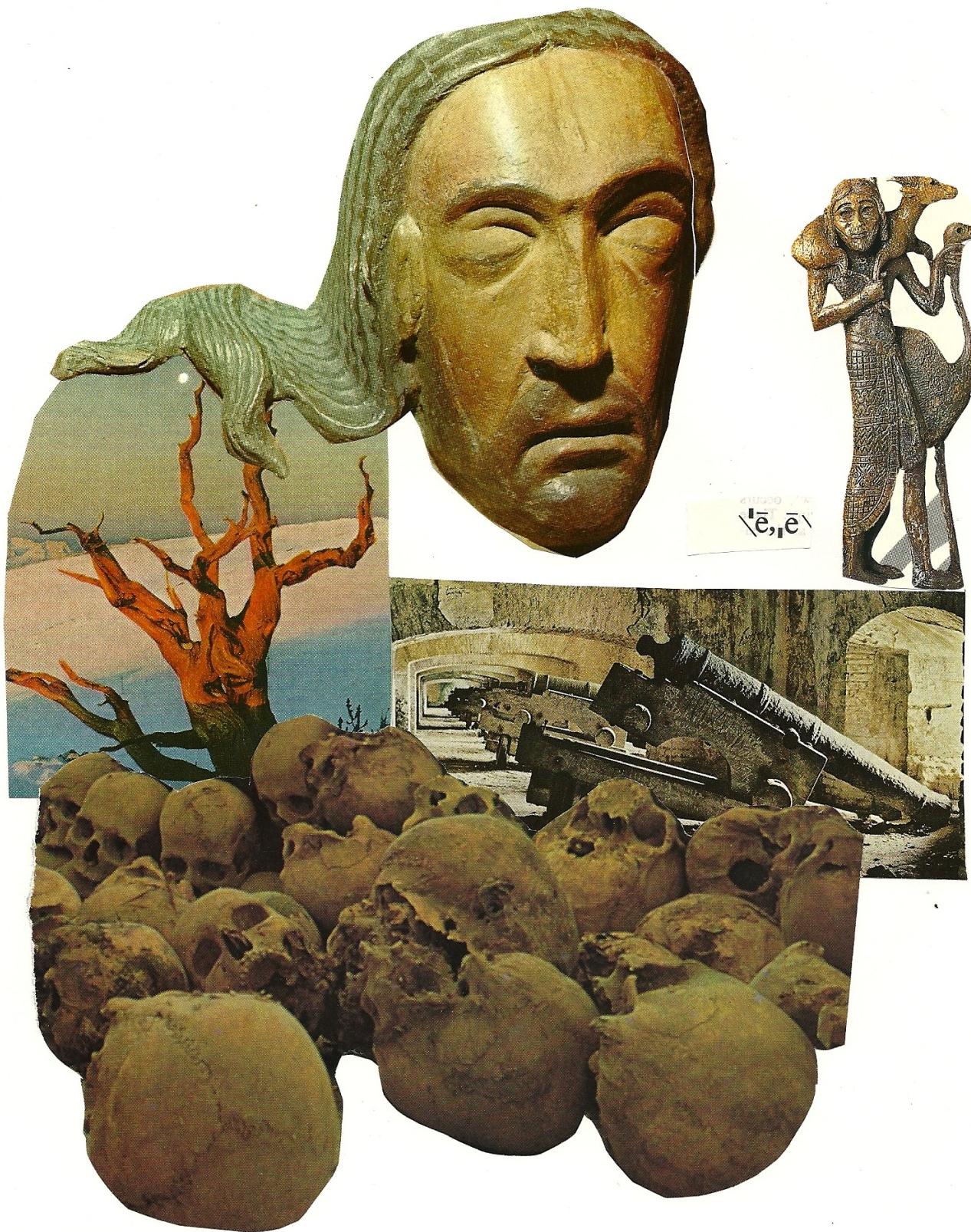
its spindles precisely armed  
dragging to the frown of the brow.

drown star, burnt plum.  
the forest re-emerges.  
Its throat waves to the sun.  
silkscreen branches.  
crazily woven in  
ululating signs  
a sea of vegetable wool

at its feet, a satyr and a silver pool.

oooh.  
oooh.  
cooing to the mask.  
fabric to the pulse.

of the past and to its muscle.



# V

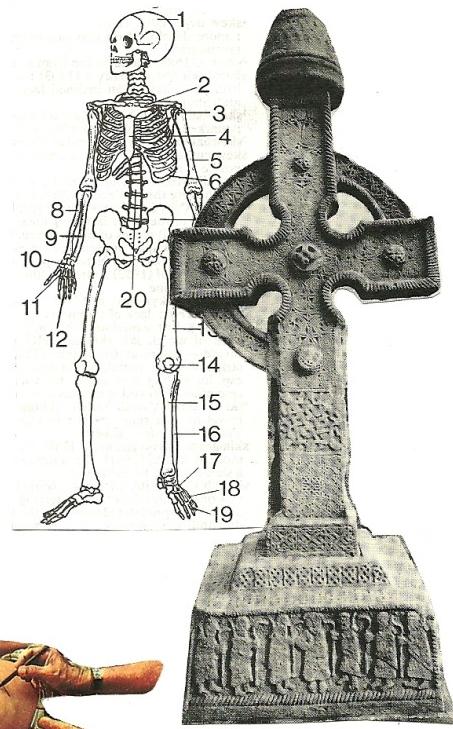
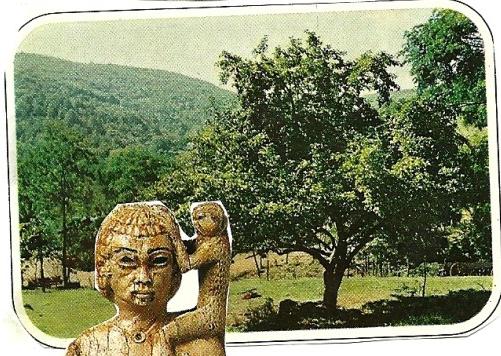
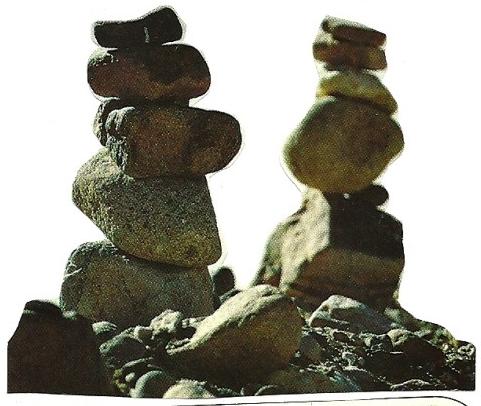
the lamb was born into her lung.  
Withered like a sweet thorn.  
wizened goat, it wheezed  
a cough above the womb.  
like a dying faith.

and bled.  
psalm of the thigh.  
its skin marked with its name.

A fourth season would not be endured.  
A bed of petals.  
The nameless weather of the inside.  
A trail of tiny legs.

The chapter of secret curses.

profane pages:  
marginalia of the bone.



## VI

born before the unborn.  
midsummer was never  
and the leaves curled vainly.  
The Old moon hid it.

meanwhile, the Fool watches  
and his tongue trembles.  
and all of the monologues of the tongues touch with hesitation.  
and the tongues lodge against teeth  
hunched like monks in prayer.

Ancient, the loss of our hands, outstretched.



## VII

They have been dead since the plague.  
Their clocks announce the moment that they rattled forth  
and only the lambs survive,  
prowling like pale ghosts the towns of dirt.

only their mouths half cracked  
sigh, to the tenderness of the maw.  
            to the frailty of dis-ease.  
muscle lifting faintly from the bone  
            like feathers.  
They could almost fly.

bones of bones  
and heart of heart.  
eyes buoyant in their sockets.  
Wool damp like the dew  
and heavy.

eyes of brain  
and the yield of years:  
the ways of dying  
in the field, in the mine  
and in the gullet of a gun.



## VIII

a mask.

the empty eye, its pupil glinting  
foetal and unsure.

curled like a reptile fear.

it does not come off.

Like the saffron mark, of a clings to the clammy skin.  
my the mark of a darling.

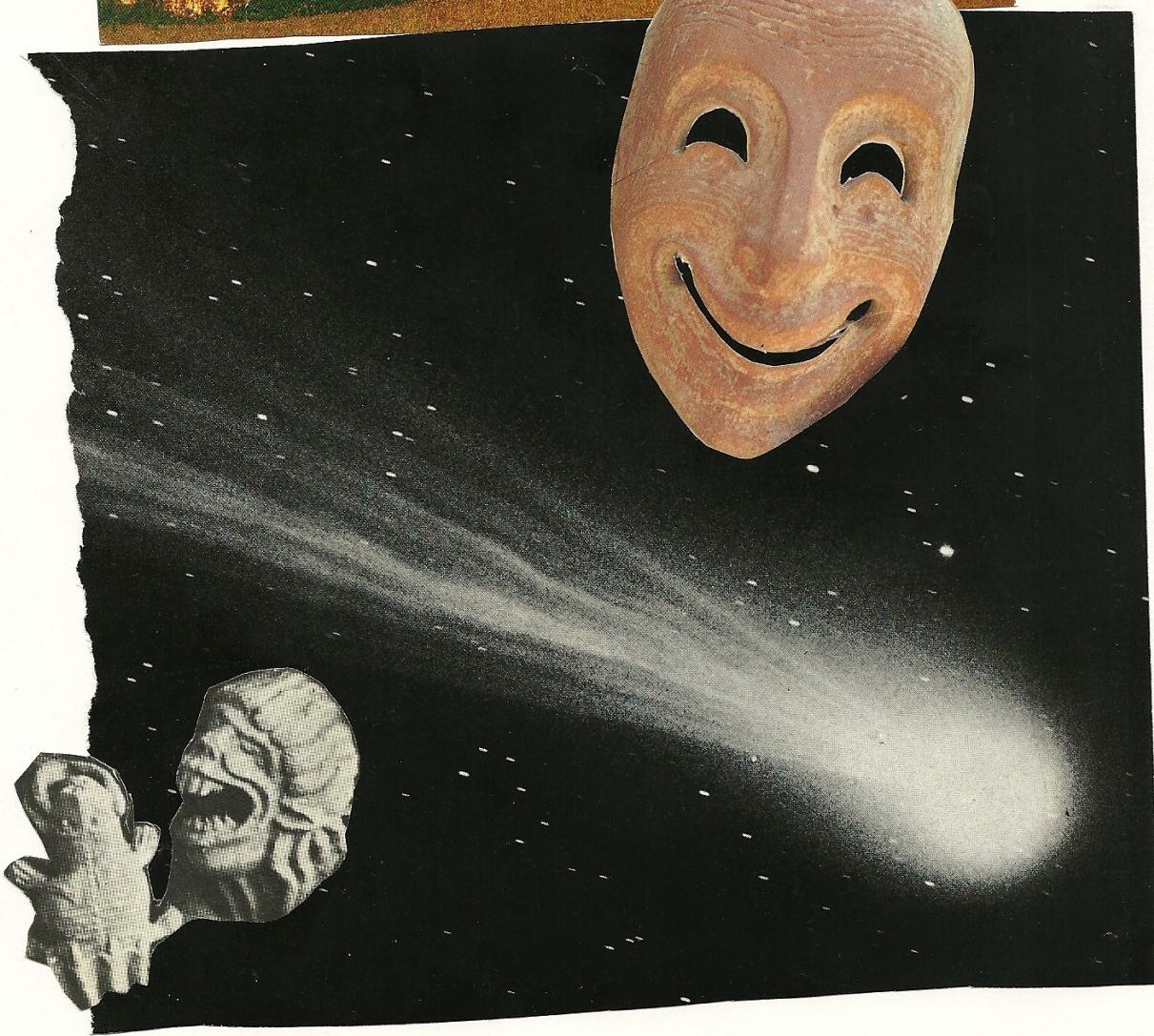
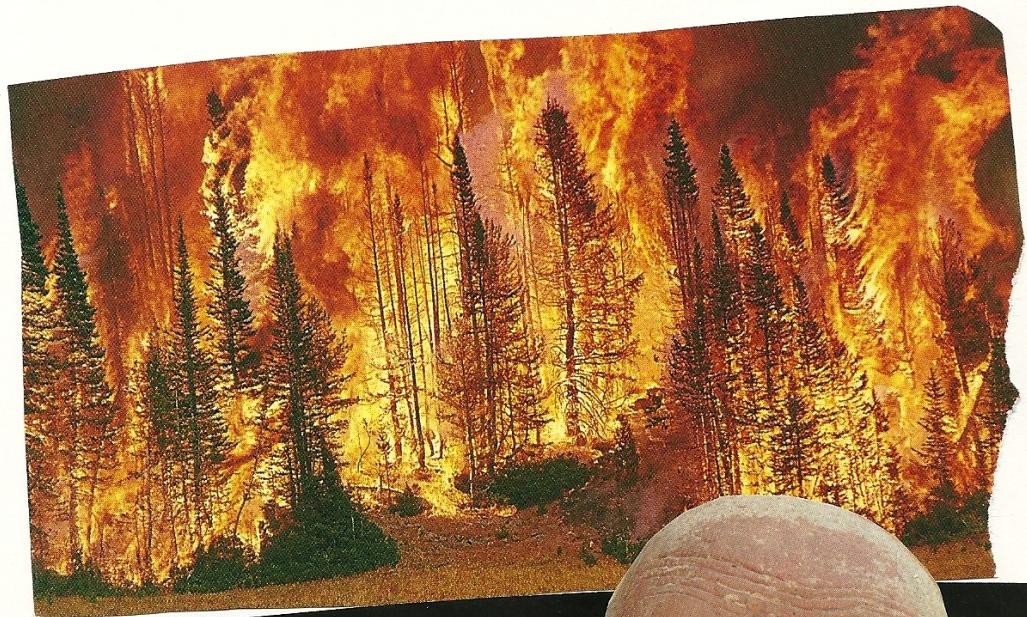
come comet, falling shell,  
stupid cupid of the wisp.

a fruit has fallen.  
whose core shines to the sin  
of what has been shown.

tarry not, my child of flesh.  
tickets, and tickering.

it shall be here soon enough.

what is known of hell yawns to you  
and the mask's cusp stretches in answer hooks.



## IX

perfume, fragrance, dance opiate.

spellbound struck of in it.  
and the sling of it.

choreographer of vague apprehensions.  
balance, and grim, and dip to the spoon.

With the dash of an airy dragoon, it takes wing.

flair of talon  
platoon that speaks: mammal.  
whole. inevitable.  
full of shells.

and their nacre, and their histories of stories.  
images lining their lungs. narratives which fill corsets  
and dinner plates of veal  
and the sing-song of ultimate.

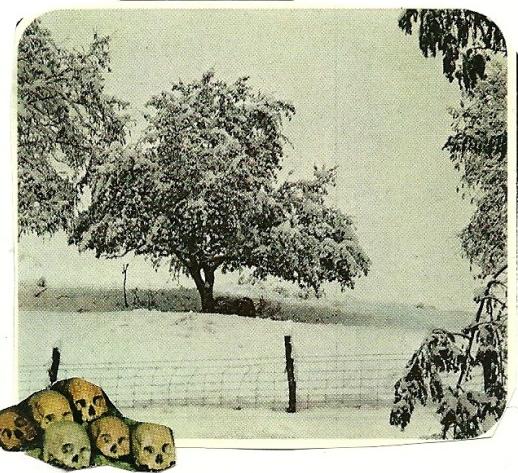
Was it a picnic at which the two which once the sat?  
Or simply another postcard?

a single line of pathos  
needling.

harpsichord phlegm?  
a single drop.  
organs choir.  
a hollow cough of counterpoint.

Lavender of guns in or it.

touch mist. touch lips.  
contraposto. elato.  
and posed to the quick.



# X

Says the shepherd:  
build a temple made entirely of coloured rice  
and the prayer will hear itself.

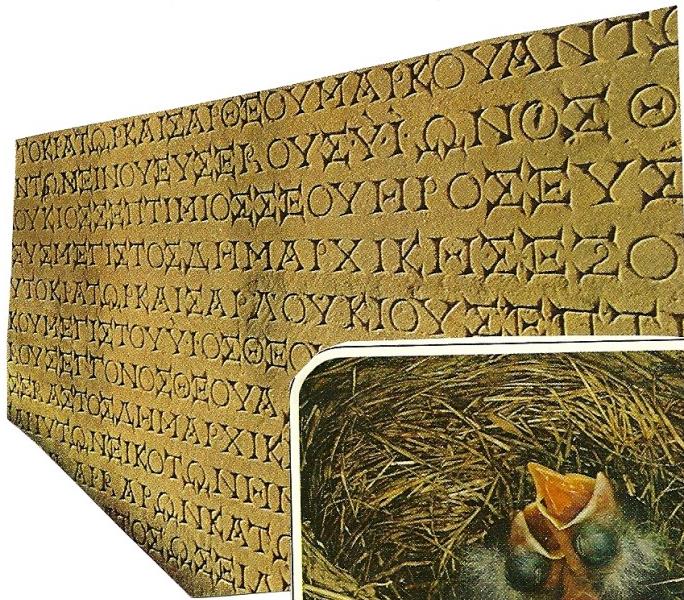
Meanwhile, the hooves are silent on the prostrate grass.

cut glass, speak vice, strike chrysalis.  
but what is noise, or the hawk  
perched upon the dove?

the cry of a serpent  
struck dumb at the spectacle of love.

a dusty mallet.  
a calender immersed in intricate remorse.

a calculus that fuels its own engine, multiplying affections.



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